

Dear Legislators,

Thank you for expanding your hearing, and allowing Michael's fund to testify for Marrow Testing Legislation as we did in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Missouri, following Rhode Island's example.

My name is Wanda Wrobel, a retired teacher and Michael's grandmother.

After experiencing Michael's daily, 7-month battle with Birkett's lymphoma and his finally succumbing to B-Cell Leukemia in 1996, we established Michael's Fund to help families in their struggle to meet marrow drive expenses.

In 1999, when Michael's Fund was invited to testify at the Massachusetts Legislative Health Committee in favor of passing marrow legislation, it was a most trying experience for me. As I spoke about my feelings regarding the suffering my grandson endured, and how in the end he could not survive long enough to find a 'match', I made an emotional statement, saying to the legislators, "I cannot believe I am here today speaking in Michael's memory!"

At some point, the legislators went into their anteroom to vote on all the issues brought up before the committee that morning. When their meeting was over, the chairman of the committee stood up and pointed in my direction and with a strong voice said, "Madam, there is a very good reason why you are here today!"

The legislation in Michael's name passed in the committee that day and became law within a few months. That experience strengthened the Michael's Fund committee in our committed effort to help save lives and raise hope after all other methods of intervention have been exhausted.

We have been fortunate over the last 10 years to be able to meet with bone marrow donors, transplant recipients and their families. From a 6-year-old girl in Tennessee to an 11-year-old boy from Oregon, the joy and gratitude of these children and their families has given Michael's Fund the opportunity to behold the fruits of our labors!

Michael's Fund has had over 40 successful transplants. Presently, a beautiful, 3-year-old girl is recovering in the Fall River area.

In January, Michael's fund conducted a drive for a young Connecticut businessman suffering from leukemia, needing a transplant. That day, 271 people came to the marrow drive with the hope that one of them would be his match. Connecticut was always one of my favorite states, and after that day my fondness grew.

Please consider seriously the most fruitful gift you could possibly give to families devastated financially and spiritually by illness. You have the potential to relieve the burden of having to finance a bone marrow drive to potentially save the life of their child!

Michael's Fund exists and was founded to give these families strength to carry on. Today, you are called to help those in desperate need that they may never lose hope in their struggle for life! Today you are here for a good reason: to reach out to those children who continue to hope both for health and for your help!

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Wanda Wrobel